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HIGH SCHOOLS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GIVING CERTAIN INFORMATION ASKED BY THE SENATE IN REGARD TO HIGH-SCHOOL FACILITIES AND NEEDS.

DECEMBER 16, 1913.—Referred to the Committee on the District of Columbia and ordered to be printed.

COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
Washington, December 13, 1913.

HON. THOMAS R. MARSHALL,
President of the United States Senate.

SIR: The Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia have the honor to reply herewith to the following resolution of the Senate of the United States of November 3, 1913:

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
November 3, 1913.

Resolved, That the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia be requested to report to the Senate whether, in its judgment, it is advisable to expend an available appropriation of \$1,200,000 in the erection of a Central High School at the corner of Eleventh and Clifton Streets Northwest, as authorized by the Sixty-second Congress, on recommendation of the former Board of Commissioners, or whether this appropriation should be divided and applied to the erection of two or more high schools, one of which shall be located in the eastern section or in the southwest section of the city.

Further, that the board be requested to furnish the Senate information in reply to the following questions:

Is the site at the corner of Eleventh and Clifton Streets centrally located as regards the population?

What is the high-school population of the various sections of the city of Washington?

What is the location of existing high schools and normal schools in the city of Washington?

What is the status of the present Central High School project?

Did the original Central High School estimates call for an appropriation of only \$700,000 for a building to accommodate 1,600 pupils; and if so, why was the estimate increased?

In the opinion of the present board of commissioners are the present high-school facilities inadequate, and in what respects?

Is a large centralized high school preferable to smaller and widely distributed high schools?

If the information is readily available, give a complete inventory of school property in the four sections of the city, showing the number of public, manual-training, high, and normal schools, their valuation, and the combined area of ground occupied for school purposes in each section of the city.

Attest:

JAMES M. BAKER, *Secretary.*

Replying to the first request of the above resolution, in the judgment of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia it is not advisable to expend all of the available appropriation in the erection of a new central high school at the corner of Eleventh and Clifton Streets NW., but that \$725,000 thereof be expended for the construction of a new central high school on the site obtained for that purpose at Eleventh and Clifton Streets NW., the building to be in conformity with the recommendations and estimates originally made by the board of education and the District Commissioners, and that the balance of the appropriation be applied for the acquisition of a site for a new high school in the eastern section of the District, for the preparation of plans for such high school, and for beginning the construction of such high school.

The second inquiry was as follows:

Is the site at the corner of Eleventh and Clifton Streets centrally located as regards the population?

The center of population of the District of Columbia, according to the Federal census of 1910, is 111 feet east of the center line of Fifth Street NW. and 159 feet south of the center line of K Street NW., or, approximately, 927 Fifth Street NW. According to a report from the surveyor of the District of Columbia, the site of the proposed new central high school, at the corner of Eleventh and Clifton Streets, is 9,600 feet from the center of population.

The third inquiry in the resolution was as follows:

What is the high-school population of the various sections of the city of Washington?

According to information furnished by the secretary of the board of education, the high-school population (the place of residence of the high-school pupils) of the various sections of the city is as follows:

| Section. | Number white pupils. | Number colored pupils. | Total. |
|----------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| Northwest..... | 2,590 | 1,018 | 3,608 |
| Northeast..... | 875 | 194 | 1,069 |
| Southwest..... | 171 | 121 | 292 |
| Southeast..... | 438 | 122 | 560 |
| Total..... | 4,074 | 1,455 | 5,529 |

The fourth inquiry of the resolution was:

What is the location of existing high schools and normal schools in the city of Washington?

The high schools and normal schools in the city of Washington are located as follows:

Eastern High School, Seventh and Pennsylvania Avenue SE.

Central High School, O Street, between Sixth and Seventh Streets NW.

Western High School, Thirty fifth and R Streets NW. (Georgetown).

M Street High School (colored), M Street, between First Street and New Jersey Avenue NW.

Business High School, Eighth Street and Rhode Island Avenue NW.

McKinley Manual Training School (white), Seventh Street and Rhode Island Avenue NW.

Armstrong Manual Training School (colored), P Street, between First and Third Streets NW.

Normal School (for white students), Eleventh and Harvard Streets NW.

Normal School (for colored students), Seventeenth and M Streets NW.

The fifth inquiry of the resolution was as follows:

What is the status of the present central high school project?

Under authority of the District appropriation act for the fiscal year 1912, approved March 2, 1911, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia purchased the site at the corner of Eleventh and Clifton Streets NW., for the proposed new central high school, at a cost of \$234,426.51, from an appropriation of \$250,000; title to this site now lies with the District of Columbia.

The District appropriation act for the fiscal year 1913 authorized the Commissioners of the District of Columbia to use the balance of the appropriation for the purchase of a site for the new central high school and the purchase of a site for a new M Street high school; for the employment of architectural services in the preparation of plans and specifications for the said high schools. Under that authority the commissioners employed Mr. W. B. Ittner, of St. Louis, to make plans and specifications for a new central high school. These plans and specifications, costing \$22,500, have been received by the commissioners. The District appropriation act for the year 1914 authorized the construction of a new central high school, to cost \$1,200,000, and made an appropriation of \$300,000 to begin its construction. Using the plans and specifications prepared by Mr. Ittner, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia are advertising for bids for the construction of the high school at a cost not to exceed \$1,200,000. Bids will be opened at the District Building on December 15.

The sixth inquiry of the resolution was as follows:

Did the original central high school estimates call for an appropriation of only \$700,000 for a building to accommodate 1,600 pupils; and, if so, why was the estimate increased?

The board of education of the District of Columbia, in its estimates to the District Commissioners for the fiscal year 1913, included an item of \$725,000 for the proposed new central high school, to accommodate 1,600 pupils. This estimate was transmitted to Congress by the District Commissioners, and, so far as can be learned from reference to the records of the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives and the Appropriations Committee of the Senate, no supplemental estimate recommending a building to cost \$1,200,000, and to accommodate 2,500 pupils, was ever made. The hearings on the District of Columbia appropriation bill for the fiscal year 1913, conducted by a subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, indicate that the recommendation of the board of education and the Commissioners of the District of Columbia was for a building to cost \$725,000 and to accommodate 1,600 pupils.

The estimates of the board of education and of the District Commissioners for a building to cost \$725,000, and to accommodate 1,600 pupils, were not approved by the subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, and the District appropriation bill for the fiscal year 1913, when reported to the House of Representatives for passage, did not contain any authorization or appropriation for the construction of a new central high school.

The hearings before the subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate on the District of Columbia appropriation bill for 1913 show that the District commissioners recommended to the Senate Appropriations Committee the inclusion in the District bill, as a Senate amendment, authorization for a new central high school to cost \$725,000 and to accommodate 1,600 pupils.

The Senate hearings on the District appropriation bill for the fiscal year 1913 do not indicate that any estimate or recommendation by the board of education or the District commissioners was made for a new central high school to cost more than \$725,000 and to accommodate more than 1,600 pupils.

The appropriation bill for the fiscal year 1913, as reported to the Senate by the Appropriations Committee and passed by the Senate, contained authorization for a new central high school to cost \$725,000, and made an appropriation of \$250,000 available for that purpose. The Senate Appropriations Committee also reported, and the Senate also adopted, the following amendment:

The Commissioners of the District of Columbia are hereby authorized to use so much as may be necessary of any unexpended balances remaining in the appropriations for the purchase of a site for a new Central High School, and for the purchase of a site for a new M Street High School, contained in the District appropriation act for the fiscal year nineteen hundred and twelve, approved March second, nineteen hundred and eleven, for the employment of architectural services in the preparation of plans and specifications for said high schools, and for such other personal services and expenses in connection therewith as may be necessary.

In conference, the Senate amendment, authorizing a new central high school to cost \$725,000, and making an appropriation of \$250,000 toward the building, was stricken out.

The amendment concerning the balances of appropriations for sites was retained, and the following proviso was added to it by the conferees:

Provided, That the plans for the new central high school shall provide accommodations for not less than 2,500 pupils.

This is the first point in the records of the Appropriations Committees of Congress in which there is any reference to a central high school of a capacity of 2,500 pupils. This evidence of the intention of Congress to provide a central high school much larger in capacity and much more costly in price than recommended in the estimates of the board of education and the District commissioners was the basis upon which, in the District appropriation act for the fiscal year 1914, there was provided authorization for a building to cost \$1,200,000 and an appropriation of \$300,000 toward such a building. There does not appear in any of the records of the Appropriations Committee any statement showing why the estimates of the board of education and the District commissioners were increased.

The seventh inquiry of the resolution was as follows:

In the opinion of the present board of commissioners, are the present high-school facilities inadequate, and in what respects?

In the judgment of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia, the present high-school facilities of Washington are inadequate, chiefly because of their location. The Central High School, the Western High School, the Business High School, the McKinley Manual Training School, the Armstrong Manual Training School (for colored students), and the M Street High School (for colored students), are all in the northwest section of the city. Only one high school, the Eastern High School, is in the eastern or southwestern section of the city. A new high school in the eastern section of the city is needed. A new central high school is needed, but in the judgment of the commissioners a central high school to accommodate 2,500 pupils is not needed at present. Future demands might justify a new central high school to accommodate 2,500 pupils, but they are not as pressing as the immediate demands of the eastern section.

The eighth inquiry of the resolution was as follows:

Is a large centralized high school preferable to smaller and widely distributed high schools?

In the opinion of the board of commissioners smaller and more widely distributed high schools are preferable to a large centralized high school, provided they are not too small for economic administration. The chief element which influenced the commissioners to arrive at this conclusion was the element of transportation, which the children of high-school age would have to pay if forced to travel from their own to another section of the city in which the large centralized school might be located.

The ninth inquiry of the resolution was as follows:

If the information is readily available, give a complete inventory of school property in the four sections of the city, showing the number of public, manual training, high, and normal schools, their valuation, and the combined area of ground occupied for school purposes in each section of the city.

It is impossible to give a complete inventory of school property in the four sections of the city. The approximate cost of the buildings, however, is known and given herewith:

There are 99 public, manual training, high, and normal schools in the city of Washington, whose valuation, location, and area of ground occupied for school purposes in each section of the city is as follows:

Northwest, 55 schools; cost, \$3,105,365; area of ground occupied for school purposes, 1,104,136 square feet.

Southwest, 14 schools; cost, \$495,996; area of ground occupied for school purposes, 276,225 square feet.

Southeast, 15 schools; cost, \$544,019; area of ground occupied for school purposes, 296,919 square feet.

Northeast, 15 schools; cost, \$521,912; area of ground occupied for school purposes, 267,411 square feet.

Very respectfully,

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
By O. P. NEWMAN, *President*.



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